



**TESTIMONY OF  
TRINITY HEALTH-NEW ENGLAND  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
DAVID BITTNER  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT &  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

**Governor's Proposed FY2018-2019 Budget**

I am here today to testify on **HB 7027, An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2019, and Making Appropriations Therefore.**

I am David Bittner, the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice President of Trinity Health-New England. Trinity Health-New England (TH-NE) is a regional health ministry which includes Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital in Hartford, Saint Mary's Hospital in Waterbury, Johnson Memorial Hospital, Inc., in Stafford Springs and The Mercy Hospital, Providence Behavioral Health Hospital and Weldon Rehabilitation Hospital in Springfield, Massachusetts. In addition, our ministry includes physician practices, an ambulatory services network, home health and various post-acute care services. We are more than 13,000 health care providers committed to providing compassionate care and improving the health of our community. Trinity Health also provides more than 265,000 emergency department visits, 40,274 surgeries and 5,178 births annually.

Trinity Health – New England is a \$1.6 billion organization; however, we are currently operating below a break-even as a result of the already punitive tax structure here in Connecticut.

Like other hospitals and health systems throughout Connecticut, we oppose the state budget as proposed. The idea of yet another tax levied on hospitals is unacceptable,

especially one that would eliminate our real property tax exemption and put us at risk for a significant tax liability with the possibility of no reimbursement.

However, while we strongly disagree with the methods proposed in the budget, we are supportive of some of the overarching goals. For instance, we believe it should be a priority to maximize the financial match available from the federal government. As we have pointed out previously, the State of Connecticut is leaving millions of dollars on the table—this needs to change.

We also understand the need to support our host cities. This is especially true of large urban hospitals such as Saint Francis and Saint Mary's. As you know, hospitals are vital economic engines in their communities. We provide good jobs and are both a lifeline and safety net to the people we serve. We support efforts to strengthen our cities.

The proposed budget as it stands is unacceptable. What is needed is further dialog between the hospitals, the legislature, and the executive branch to find innovative solutions that meet the needs of all parties. We believe that there are solutions that can meet our various goals, and look forward to being part of discussions that move towards that end.

Thank you for your consideration.